

IS YOUR DOG AFRAID OF FIREWORKS?

Signs of Firework phobia

- Barking
- Unable to settle, wandering around looking anxious
- Hiding under/behind furniture
- Climbing on your knee
- Panting/whining
- Constantly clingy
- Wont go outside when is normally happy to go for walks

Many people coax and give lots of attention to their pets at this time of year. However, when faced with anxious situations, pets look to their owners for guidance on how to behave. If a pet is reassured and coaxed when they are doing the above actions, it reaffirms to the animal there is something to be worried about, making them act out their fears even more

Firework season is approaching. Are you prepared if your dog shows the above behaviour?

Things you can do to help your pet through this difficult time are :

- 1) Carry on with life as normal - rules for your pet stay the same ie; sleeping and eating arrangements etc.
- 2) If your pet climbs onto your knee during this time, either ignore it completely or stand up and leave (try not to use your hands as this is considered interaction by your pet)
- 3) If your pet goes and hides behind/under furniture, leave it there, or make a small, dark place for your it to go it it feels the need to hide.
- 4) Do not cuddle, stroke or talk to your pet when it is doing any of the above behaviour.
- 5) Do not turn up the TV or radio to try and mask the noises as it will make the animal sensitive to other noises as well.
- 6) Take your pet out at times when less fireworks are likely to go off.

Things we can do to help your pet :

- 1) Several months before bonfire night, you can use a 'sounds scary' disc of firework noises to desensitise your dog to firework noise
- 2) A week before bonfire night, you can use:
 - i) A DAP diffuser. This releases a chemical called a pheromone which helps dogs to feel calm in a stressful environment. It needs to be plugged in in a room where you expect your dog to be on bonfire night for a few days before the loud periods.
 - ii) We can give a medication called Zylkene, which is a non-sedative tablet which helps dogs to feel calm. You need to give this 2-3 days before the first fireworks go off and continue until the firework period is over
- 3) If your pet panics as fireworks start, you can use a sedative called Acetylpromazine to help it sleep through the worst of the bangs. Not all pets can take this so it has to be prescribed with the permission of a vet. However, if we have seen your pet recently and have an accurate body weight, we can usually supply this for you to give at home.



You must consistently follow these rules at all times, and all family members must adhere to them, otherwise your pet will become confused